

## **Trails and Accessibility by Rebecca Lexa**

As the weather improves and more people head outdoors, it's important to keep accessibility in mind for those who may be using wheelchairs or other tools to get around, or those who have health conditions that may prevent a long, rugged hike. Willapa National Wildlife Refuge offers trails of varying difficulties.

The most accessible trail is the Art Trail at the Refuge Headquarters on Highway 101. This quarter mile round trip is on a nice, wheelchair-friendly boardwalk. Not only does it feature sculptures celebrating Refuge wildlife, but it's a great place to observe birds and other animals in a wetland habitat.

Teal Slough is a little over a quarter mile long and goes up an old graded road. The first couple hundred feet are up a moderately sloped hill, but after that it's flat. This is good for someone who wants a short hike and can handle a brief climb to see the old-growth cedars.

The South Bay Trail is also primarily flat, especially if you walk out to the bird blind near 85th Street. There is one hill between the trailhead and the new dike, but the trail is wide and graded, and there are logs to sit on partway up one side.

At Leadbetter Point the trails are all relatively flat on the Refuge side (the state side does have some hilly parts.) Some of the trails are longer, and the terrain is more rugged. Look out for driftwood on the bay beach, and be mindful of seasonal flooding and other hazards once you get into the trees.